

2187 Orchard Lake Rd.
Sylvan Lake, MI 48320

June 26, 2007

The Honorable Paul Condino
Chair, Judiciary Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
P O Box 30014
Lansing MI 48909

Dear Representative Condino:

On behalf of the Traffic Improvement Association (TIA), I want to send our support for HB 4920 & HB 4921.

In March 2007, TIA celebrated its 40th anniversary of promoting traffic safety in Michigan. We have been successful in improving safety belt usage, educating the public on traffic safety issues, reducing traffic crashes/fatalities using sophisticated traffic data analyses but we have been unable to impact the tragedy of drunk driving fatalities and serious injuries.

There has been some progress, but with nearly 40% of the fatalities in Michigan caused by drinking and driving, I think these two bills represent the public's view that it is no longer acceptable and the extreme (high risk) drivers need to be held accountable for their aberrant behavior.

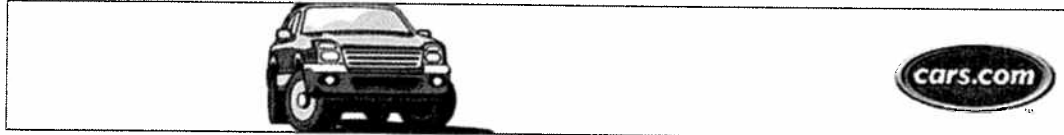
There are many reasons why stronger laws need to be enacted. Technology offers hope to mitigate this problem by addressing the high risk drivers. It is important that we make the effort NOW and enact HB 4920 and HB 4921.

Please don't hesitate to call me at 248-334-4971 to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

/s/ Frank P. Cardimen, Jr.

Frank P. Cardimen, Jr.
President
frankc@tiami.org

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Friday, June 22, 2007

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Capitol Report

Bills target super drunken drivers

Bipartisan plan seeks installation of devices in vehicles that prevent driving in extreme cases.

Charlie Cain / Detroit News Lansing Bureau

LANSING -- The Legislature is again attempting to crack down on extremely drunken drivers by making them install interlock devices on their vehicles that will prevent them from starting if the driver has alcohol on his or her breath.

Thirty-five other states -- including all of our Midwest neighbors -- have already enacted laws to target extreme drunken drivers.

Under a two-bill package, a driver would be considered to be super drunk if his or her blood-alcohol content is 0.15. The legal definition of drunken driving here is a reading of 0.08 or higher.

"Nobody reaches this level of intoxication by mistake, or through social drinking," said Rep. Dan Acciavatti, R-Chesterfield, one of the sponsors. "The average 180-pound male must consume at least 8 drinks in an hour to reach 0.15 BAC, and nobody should be driving an automobile at this point."

Similar legislation died in the last legislative session. But Acciavatti said this year's effort is more promising and bipartisan. The other lead sponsor is Rep. Marc Corriveau, D-Northville.

In addition to having to install an ignition control device, a person found guilty of extreme drunken driving also would have to undergo a professional assessment and treatment program.

The main opposition comes from the Michigan Licensed Beverage Association and the Michigan Restaurant Association, who argue that 0.15 is too low for extreme drunken driving.

According to the Michigan State Police, more than 40,000 Breathalyzer tests were administered to suspected drunken drivers in 2005 and the average test result was a BAC of 0.15.

Acciavatti said he may compromise and raise the standard "a little bit upwards."

The package is in the House Judiciary Committee, where it should have little trouble winning approval since all but one of the 15 committee members are listed as secondary sponsors of the legislation. A committee vote could occur soon, backers say.

There were 55,000 drunken driving arrests in Michigan in 2005.

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Corriveau

Too drunk to drive

Under Michigan law a person with a blood-alcohol content of 0.08 is considered legally drunk. But some score well over that level.

Statewide average: 0.15

Average in Wayne and Macomb counties: 0.16

Average in Oakland County: 0.15

Towns with high averages: Hazel Park: 0.2;

River Rouge 0.19, Grosse Pointe, Hamtramck, Madison Heights, Roseville, St. Clair Shores and Trenton all averaged 0.18.

Source: Michigan State Police

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RESPONSIBILITY
MATTERS 

► Legislation and Enforcement

Anheuser-Busch advocates graduated licensing for new drivers - it is a proven approach to reducing traffic accidents and fatalities among youths. Graduated licensing (GL) systematically grants driving privileges to young drivers. Privileges build in stages as experience accumulates under safer, lower-risk driving conditions.

Further, we need to focus on hard-core drunk drivers, those who are repeat offenders and/or have a high blood-alcohol content (0.15 percent or higher). These hard-core offenders, while a small minority of drivers on the road, cause the most harm and a high percentage of fatalities.

► programs



There are several ways in which Anheuser-Busch is active in the fight against drunk driving. Check with your [local distributor] to see which programs are active in your area.

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NewsMakers Story

Anheuser-Busch Praises South Carolina Governor, Legislature for Approving Underage Drinking, Drunk-Driving Prevention Bill

Anheuser-Busch supports mandatory use of interlocks as an effective part of a comprehensive sanctioning and intervention plan for those offenders with repeat DWI convictions.

19/06/07 Anheuser-Busch applauded South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford and the State Legislature for passing the "Prevention of Underage Drinking and Access to Alcohol Act," a new law aimed at preventing underage drinking and making it more difficult for drunk drivers to get behind the wheel.

"We commend Governor Sanford and the bill sponsors, State Senator Joel Lourie and State Representative Ted Pitts, and the legislature for taking this significant step to help fight underage drinking among South Carolina youth and to crack down on repeat drunk drivers," stated Jerry Mullane, region vice president of Government Affairs at Anheuser-Busch.

The legislation, S. 213, contains a number of provisions to keep alcohol out of the hands of minors, including increased penalties for teens caught purchasing, possessing or consuming alcohol and adults caught providing alcohol to minors. Penalties include graduated fines of up to \$500, imprisonment for up to 30 days and drivers license suspension for up to one year.

"This law will help complement and reinforce the positive trends in underage-drinking prevention in recent years," Mullane noted. "According to the federal government's most recent National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 86 percent of South Carolina adolescents, ages 12 to 17, are doing the right thing by not drinking."

In addition, to help address drunk driving, the law mandates the use of ignition interlocks for repeat drunk-driving offenders. Anheuser-Busch supports mandatory use of interlocks as an effective part of a comprehensive sanctioning and intervention plan for those offenders with repeat DWI convictions.

"In the past 25 years, drunk-driving declines in South Carolina have not kept pace with the national average," Mullane added. "However, according to U.S. Department of Transportation data, we have seen declines since 2000, and this new law will help continue this progress by helping keep repeat offenders off the road." Research from the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) has shown these repeat offenders slip through the cracks of the criminal justice system and continue to drive drunk.
